AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1. (Canceled).

1 2. (Previously Presented) An Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) controller arranged to be

2 coupled through a packet-based network to a plurality of remote telephone stations and one or

3 more attendant telephone stations, the ACD controller comprising call reception logic that

4 controls the establishment of telephone sessions between the remote telephone stations and the

5 attendant telephone stations;

6 wherein the call reception logic operates to receive call initiation signals from a

7 particular one of the remote telephone stations; to monitor if an attendant availability parameter

8 is met; if the attendant availability parameter is not met, to send at least one data information

9 message to the particular remote telephone station via the packet-based network; and, if the

10 attendant availability parameter is met, to establish an audio channel between the particular

11 remote telephone station and a particular one of the attendant telephone stations, wherein the

12 call reception logic further operates to query the capabilities of the particular remote telephone

13 station prior to sending the data information message, a format for the data information message

14 being determined based upon the capabilities of the particular remote telephone station.

1   3. (Previously Presented) An ACD controller according to claim 2, wherein the packet-based

2   network is an Internet Protocol (IP) network and the data information message is transmitted

3   within an IP packet.

1   4. (Previously Presented) An ACD controller according to claim 2, wherein the call reception

2   logic further operates to determine a waiting parameter to be presented to a user at the particular

3   remote telephone station, the data information message comprising said waiting parameter.

1   5. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 4, wherein the waiting parameter comprises

2   a number corresponding to an order in which the call initiation signals were received from the

3   particular remote telephone station with respect to other call initiation signals received from

4   other ones of the remote telephone stations.

1   6. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 4, wherein the waiting parameter comprises

2   an estimate of the time before the attendant availability parameter will be met.

1   7. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 4, wherein the call reception logic further

2   operates to update the waiting parameter periodically until the attendant availability parameter

3   is met and to send further data information signals comprising updated waiting parameters to

4   the particular remote telephone station via the packet-based network until the attendant

5   availability parameter is met.

1   8. (Previously Presented) An Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) controller arranged to be

2   coupled through a packet-based network to a plurality of remote telephone stations and one or

3   more attendant telephone stations, the ACD controller comprising call reception logic that

4   controls the establishment of telephone sessions between the remote telephone stations and the

5   attendant telephone stations;

6   wherein the call reception logic operates to receive call initiation signals from a

7   particular one of the remote telephone stations; to monitor if an attendant availability parameter

8   is met; if the attendant availability parameter is not met, to send at least one data information

9   message to the particular remote telephone station via the packet-based network; and, if the

10   attendant availability parameter is met, to establish an audio channel between the particular

11   remote telephone station and a particular one of the attendant telephone stations, wherein the

12   data information message comprises an alert request option; and

13   wherein the call reception logic further operates to monitor for receipt of an alert request

14   activation message from the particular remote telephone station in response to the alert request

15   option; and, if the call reception logic receives the alert request activation message from the

16   particular remote telephone station, to send an alert on message to the particular remote

17   telephone station when the attendant availability parameter is met.

1   9. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 8, wherein the call reception logic further

2   operates to periodically determine a waiting parameter prior to the attendant availability

3   parameter being met and to periodically send a data information message comprising said

4   waiting parameter to the particular remote telephone station.

1   10. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 8, wherein the call reception logic further

2   operates to send an alert mode indication to the particular remote telephone station if the call

3   reception logic receives the alert request activation message from the particular remote

4   telephone station.

1   11. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 10, wherein the alert mode indication is

2   an alert mode icon to be displayed on the display of the particular remote telephone station.

1   12. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 8, wherein the alert on message comprises

2   a ring request for the particular remote telephone station.

1   13. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 12, wherein the ring request comprises

2   a volume request to ensure a ring volume selection corresponding to the particular remote

3   telephone station is at a sufficiently high level.

1   14. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 8, wherein the alert on message comprises

2   an email message being sent to an email account corresponding to the particular remote

3   telephone station.

1   15. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 8, wherein the alert request option

2   comprises a text string to be displayed on a display screen associated with the particular remote

3   telephone station, the text string indicating to a user of the particular remote telephone station

4   how to send an alert request activation message to the call reception logic.

5   16. (Previously Presented) An Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) controller arranged to be

6   coupled through a packet-based network to a plurality of remote telephone stations and one or

7   more attendant telephone stations, the ACD controller comprising call reception logic that

8   controls the establishment of telephone sessions between the remote telephone stations and the

9   attendant telephone stations;

10   wherein the call reception logic operates to receive call initiation signals from a

11   particular one of the remote telephone stations; to monitor if an attendant availability parameter

12   is met; if the attendant availability parameter is not met, to send at least one data information

13   message to the particular remote telephone station via the packet-based network; and, if the

14   attendant availability parameter is met, to establish an audio channel between the particular

15   remote telephone station and a particular one of the attendant telephone stations, wherein the

16   data information message comprises a plurality of audio options; and

17   wherein the call reception logic further operates to monitor for receipt of one of a

18   plurality of audio option activation messages from the particular remote telephone station, each

19   of the audio option activation messages corresponding to a selection of a particular one of the

20   audio options; and, if the call reception logic receives one of the audio option activation

21   messages from the particular remote telephone station, to send audio signals associated with the

22   received audio option activation message to the particular remote telephone station.

1   17. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 16, wherein each of the audio options

2   comprises a text string to be displayed on a display screen associated with the particular remote

3   telephone station, each of the text strings indicating to a user of the particular remote telephone

4   station how to send an audio option activation message corresponding to the particular audio

5   option to the call reception logic.

1   18. (Previously Presented) An ACD controller according to claim 16, wherein the data

2   information message comprises a browser request option; and

3   wherein the call reception logic further operates to monitor for receipt of a browser

4   request activation message from the particular remote telephone station in response to the

5   browser request option; and, if the call reception logic receives a browser request activation

6   message from the particular remote telephone station, to initiate a browser session with the

7   particular remote telephone station such that the particular remote telephone station can access

8   data information within a browser format.

1   19. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 18, wherein the browser format is a web

2   page.

1   20. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 18, wherein, if a browser session is

2   initiated with the particular remote telephone station, the call reception logic further operates

3   to send an alert message to the particular remote telephone station when the attendant

4   availability parameter is met.

1   21. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 18, wherein, if a browser session is

2   initiated with the particular remote telephone station, the call reception logic further operates

3   to send at least a portion of the data information accessed by the particular remote telephone

4   station during the browser session to the particular attendant telephone station when establishing

5   the audio channel between the particular remote telephone station and the particular attendant

6   telephone station.

1   22. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 18, wherein, if a browser session is

2   initiated with the particular remote telephone station, the call reception logic further operates

3   to initiate a browser session with the particular attendant telephone station when establishing

4   the audio channel between the particular remote telephone station and the particular attendant

5   telephone station, the browser session being identical to that initiated with the particular remote

6   telephone station.

1   23. (Original) An ACD controller according to claim 18, wherein the browser request option

2   comprises a text string to be displayed on a display screen associated with the particular remote

3   telephone station, the text string indicating to a user of the particular remote telephone station

4   how to send a browser request activation message to the call reception logic.

1   24. (Original) An Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) controller arranged to be coupled through

2   a packet-based network to a plurality of remote telephone stations and one or more attendant

3   telephone stations, the ACD controller comprising call reception logic that controls the

4   establishment of telephone sessions between the remote telephone stations and the attendant

5   telephone stations;

6   wherein the call reception logic operates to receive call initiation signals from a

7   particular one of the remote telephone stations; to initiate a browser session with the particular

8   remote telephone station such that the particular remote telephone station can access data

9   information within a browser format; to monitor for receipt of an attendant request message

10   being sent from the particular remote telephone station; and, if an attendant request message is

11   received, to monitor if an attendant availability parameter is met and, if the attendant availability

12   parameter is met, to establish an audio channel between the particular remote telephone station

13   and a particular one of the attendant telephone stations.

1 25. (Previously Presented) An Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system comprising an ACD

2 controller and one or more attendant telephone stations arranged to be coupled to the ACD

3 controller, each of the ACD controller and the attendant telephone stations arranged to be

4 coupled through a packet-based network to a plurality of remote telephone stations, the ACD

5 controller comprising call reception logic that controls the establishment of telephone sessions

6 between the remote telephone stations and the attendant telephone stations;

7 wherein the call reception logic operates to receive call initiation signals from a

8 particular one of the remote telephone stations; to monitor if an attendant availability parameter

9 is met; if the attendant availability parameter is not met, to send at least one data information

10 message including softkey option labels to the particular remote telephone station via the

11 packet-based network; and if the attendant availability parameter is met, to establish an audio

12 channel between the particular remote telephone station and a particular one of the attendant

13 telephone stations.

1 26. (Original) An ACD system according to claim 25 further comprising a Local Area Network

2 (LAN) arranged to be coupled to the packet-based network, each of the attendant telephone

3 stations being coupled through the LAN to the ACD controller.

1 27. - 28. (Canceled)

1   29. (Previously Presented) Within an Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) controller, a method

2   of establishing a telephone session between a remote telephone station and an attendant

3   telephone station via a packet-based network, the method comprising:

4   receiving call initiation signals from the remote telephone station;

5   sending at least one data information message containing softkey option labels to the

6   remote telephone station via the packet-based network;

7   monitoring if an attendant availability parameter is met;

8   if the attendant availability parameter is not met, sending at least one data information

9   message to the particular remote telephone station via the packet-based network; and

10   if the attendant availability parameter is met, to establish an audio channel between the

11   particular remote telephone station and a particular one of the attendant telephone stations.

1   30. (Original) A switching device arranged to be coupled through a telephone network to at

2   least one remote telephone station and an Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system

3   comprising at least one attendant telephone station, the switching device comprising alert

4   request logic that is operable when the remote telephone station is connected to the ACD system

5   through the switching device;

6   wherein the alert request logic operates to monitor for receipt of an alert request

7   activation signal; and, if the alert request activation signal is received, to store a directory

8   number corresponding to the remote telephone station, to disconnect the remote telephone

9   station from the switching device, to monitor for an attendant ready signal from the ACD

10   system and, if the attendant ready signal is received, to initiate a telephone session with the

11   remote telephone station using the stored directory number in order to connect the remote

12   telephone station and the ACD system.

1   31. (Original) A switching device according to claim 30, wherein the alert request activation

2   signal is a sequence of Dual Tone Multi-Frequency (DTMF) signals.

1   32. (Original) A switching device according to claim 30, wherein, in order for the alert request

2   logic to monitor for receipt of an attendant ready signal, the alert request logic further operates

3   to periodically send a recorded voice message to the ACD system indicating how to send an

4   attendant ready signal to the alert request logic.

1   33. (Original) A switching device according to claim 30, wherein the attendant ready signal

2   comprises a ring back signal that is generated when a telephone call is transferred.

1   34. (Original) Within a computing device coupled to a telephone network, a method of alerting

2   a telephone station that an attendant within an Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system is

3   ready for a telephone session, the telephone station being within a telephone session with the

4   ACD system through the computing device, the method comprising:

5   monitoring for receipt of an alert request activation signal; and

6   if the alert request activation signal is received, storing a directory number corresponding

7   to the remote telephone station; disconnecting the telephone station from the computing device;

8   monitoring for an attendant ready signal from the ACD system; and, if the attendant ready

9   signal is received, initiating a telephone session with the telephone station using the stored

10   directory number in order to connect the telephone station and the ACD system.

1 35. (Original) A telephone station arranged to be coupled through a telephone network to an

2 Automatic Call Distribution (ACD) system comprising at least one attendant telephone station,

3 the telephone station comprising alert request logic that is operable when the telephone station

4 is connected to the ACD system;

5 wherein the alert request logic operates to monitor for receipt of an alert request

6 activation signal; and, if the alert request activation signal is received, to periodically send a

7 recorded voice message to the ACD system indicating how to send an attendant ready signal

8 to the alert request logic, to monitor for an attendant ready signal from the ACD system and, if

9 the attendant ready signal is received, to initiate a alert operation on the telephone station.

36. (New) An ACD controller according to claim 8, wherein the call reception logic further

operates to query the capabilities of the particular remote telephone station prior to sending the

data information message, a format for the data information message being determined based

upon the capabilities of the particular remote telephone station.